

To: Chairs and Members of the Committee On Children

It is with great honor and urgency, that I hereby firmly support Senate Bill no. 207: An Act Concerning Funding For A Lyme Disease Prevention and Education Program. I believe that it's time to establish a thorough statewide program dedicated to Lyme disease prevention. The program specified on the bill is a well established effort founded by two great community leaders, Jennifer Reid and Karen Gaudian, whose experience had long resonated throughout Western Connecticut and beyond. They've had to deal with the consequences of Lyme disease through the experiences of their daughters, as much of their lives had been greatly altered, particularly through high school and college. I, myself, lost many of those years to the effects of this mysterious, yet increasingly prevalent disease. In 2008, Jennifer and Karen responded to their situation by founding a Lyme prevention Program called BLAST, to help bring a well-rounded knowledge base to schools throughout the region.

In short, B.L.A.S.T. stands for the five simple steps we take, particularly in outdoor events, to help prevent disease spread by ticks. B is for Bathe, L is for Look, A is for Apply, S is for Spray, and T is for Treat. These steps are simple, and yet have shown significant results in reducing risk for disease. This model has been used in many schools, health fairs, and presentations throughout the western CT community, and the awareness has become much more profound and supported since, with people from other areas starting to see its potential, such as myself.

Bill no. 207 states that the CDH be awarded \$450,000 in funds to be used to make this special program statewide, where every school and every community in CT can have much better access to the vital resources and educational tools needed to make Lyme prevention a seamless routine in all our daily lives. In addition, these funds would also be used for mass media marketing, such as TV, radio, and local ads, which would keep everybody properly informed and encouraged to taking simple, but appropriate steps in preventing Lyme disease.

We've come a long way, from the many mysteries behind the diagnosing and treatment of Lyme, to the many unknowns since. It seems there's always something we're learning about Lyme everyday, but we would now have a good start, with one of the very few concrete community efforts in the country for Lyme prevention. My colleagues and I now share in our fight against this disease, and we'd like to see everybody have a fair chance in the face of Lyme, to know what we did not know when we were in school, and to grow up with that knowledge and

backbone going forward. In turn, future generations have an even better chance. Eventually, with programs such as BLAST, we might be able to lower those nasty statistics in Lyme disease. And being one of the most endemic states in the country, this would be a great boost for us. Thank you so much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey DiCera (Milford, CT)